

# ESCAMBIA COUNTY

## Honorable David J. Jordan

Escambia County Courthouse  
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Candace Goodsen

Vista Volunteer: Charlene Gibbs

## PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Substance Abuse Prevention
2. At-Risk Children
3. Parent Education Information Accessibility

# Issues

*Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county.*

## Health - Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

### Substance Abuse Prevention

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Create a coordinated strategy to prevent substance abuse for children and adolescents. (This will also help decrease the infant mortality rate as well as a vast assortment of social, health, economic and education problems.)
- Form a Task Force of providers/organizations within the county currently providing prevention based programs for better coordination and to avoid duplication.
- Assure that all prevention programs are scientifically based.
- Continue the Substance Abuse program for teens at the Compass School in Atmore.

## Infant Mortality Rate

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Work to re-establish the Fetal-Infant Mortality Review Program (RIMRP) for Escambia County
- Continue to include the importance of early prenatal care in Family Education Classes in schools and churches. (Includes providing brochures)
- Work to assure that all pregnancies are insured
- Continue to decrease teen pregnancy
- Continue to promote the "Back to Sleep Program"
- Promote programs to reduce pre-maturity including programs to decrease drug use in pregnant women.
- Continue early interventions in infections during pregnancy
- Continue to work with school lunch programs to assure a more balanced diet at all age levels.
- Recommend vitamins (especially folic acid) at puberty.
- Recommend that school vending machines be stocked with healthy snacks/beverages

## Safety - Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

### At-Risk Children

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Establish criteria for At-Risk children through Children Policy Council
- Coordination and collaboration between community partners to identify at-risk children
- Utilization of a multi-disciplinary/multi-need forum to advocate for appropriate referrals and services to eliminate gaps in service and prevent duplication
- Family assessment to be completed on all children and their family prior to court action, i.e. delinquency, dependency, and children in need of supervision
- Assist and support the development and funding of the Child Advocacy Center for prevention, treatment, and education.
- Establish protocol for determining parental responsibility and consequence for lack of family involvement.

## Juvenile Violence and Crime

### Policy Council Action Steps:

- Identify At-Risk Children from community partners
- Gather statistical information from Drug Task Force, local law enforcement agencies, schools, DHR, other community partners to identify children who are at-risk, i.e. Child abuse and/or neglect, substance abuse, family violence, teen pregnancy, STDs, truancy, peer violence (school and community) including threats of violence.
- Family assessment to be completed on all children and family involved prior to court action including delinquency, dependency, and children in need of supervision
- Identify other court inventions and preventions, i.e. CASA or Big Brother/Sister, informal adjustments, community service, mentoring programs

## Education - Children

learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

### Drop Out Rate

#### Policy Council Action Steps:

- Expanded academic intervention program for regular education students
- Suspension/Community service grants
- Peer Mentors

### Academic/Behavioral Intervention Programs for Special Education Students

#### Policy Council Action Steps:

- Extended day/year programs; after school programs
- Intervention programs counseling
- Peer Mentors

## Early Care and Education - Children

(0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

### Secure constant funding for Kid One Transport

### Communicating Early Childhood Care and Education Program information to the community

#### Policy Council Action Steps:

- Updating existing directory information
- Distributing directories to parents
- Informing service providers of techniques to refer families for services

### Affordable quality childcare

#### Policy Council Action Steps:

- Evaluate childcare waiting
- Create environment for supporting NEW service providers with focus on faith-based community
- Promote early brain development and child development information for childcare providers and families they serve

## Economic Security

- Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

## Workforce Development

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Increase education level to the state average
- Survey of current education/skills needed by employees
- Escambia CPC to sponsor/promote a career fair

## Resource Information

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Centralized Coordination of local resources to be made available to the public

## Parent Involvement and Skills

- Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

## Parent Education Information Accessibility

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Design a comprehensive listing of parenting resources in Escambia County
- Update and complete parenting booklet
- Distribute to parents of Escambia County (via schools, childcare settings, hospitals, agencies, etc.)

## Involve faith-based community as parenting partners

Policy Council Action Steps:

- Provide community awareness of parenting issues and services by reaching out and visiting the faith-based community
- Engage with faith-based community to provide parenting sessions in their church once a year
- Include faith-based representatives in CPC committees

# Policy Recommendation

1. Better funding for all prenatal programs
2. Better access to state vital statistics for analysis of fetal-infant deaths
3. Obtain funding for substance abuse prevention programs
4. Establish uniform research-based criteria for at-risk children
5. Establish funding for a Multi-Needs Coordinator position
6. Allow students to attend career technical classes before 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
7. Mentoring: peer to peer, adult to youth, male to male

